

Consumer Electronics

Why we care

The average American household contains 24 electronic products, and we are replacing them all the time. Why? Planned obsolescence and our desire for the latest features are partly to blame. We keep computers only about four years and smart phones less than three years. All of this has a big environmental impact. The manufacture of electronics is chemical and water intensive and emits heavy metals into the air and water. E-waste is the fastest growing component of municipal waste in the US, and much of it is toxic. In Oregon it is illegal to dispose of TVs, computers, or monitors in landfills. Although electronics are not considered big energy consumers relative to other household appliances, iPhones can consume as much electricity as a refrigerator if you include the energy used in the data centers that keep you connected 24/7.

Simple, positive steps

- Purchase Energy Star labeled computers, which use 30%-65% less energy than computers without the designation.
- Buy only the product features you need. More features usually translate into more energy use.
- Minimize use of remote data centers: back up data on a portable hard drive; delete unwanted photos before storing on the cloud.
- Set your computer to [sleep or hibernate automatically](#) and turn off at night.
- If your product needs a repair, [contact a local shop](#).
- For equipment you no longer want, consider donating for reuse before recycling because that saves more resources and creates more jobs. Call 503-234-3000.
- Recycle computers, monitors, TVs, printers, keyboards and mice at [Oregon E-Cycles collection sites](#).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.